

Welcome to St Mary's Foundation Stage



## School Mission Statement

Our school family wants this to be a safe, caring, creative and happy place, where we all have a fair chance to learn and grow together and to do the best we can.

We do this by knowing and loving Jesus more every day and by following his teachings in a joyful way.

## Introduction

This document contains information that is specific to St Mary's Early Years Foundation Stage, please make sure you also read the school handbook for information which is relevant to the whole school.

In this handbook you will find information about your child's transition to St Mary's and what their school days will be like once they have started.

## Staff:

### **Nursery:**

Otters: Mrs O'Halloran and Mrs Myers

### **Reception:**

Dolphins: Miss Dawson and Mrs Wilson

Llamas: Miss Lloyd and Mrs Wakelin

## School visit

If your child is joining our Nursery or is a new child to the school and is joining Reception, we will be offering a school visit for you and your child in September. Children can find a new school frightening; this visit will enable us to see your child individually and for them to see the environment with you. Recognising a friendly adult face as soon as they enter the classroom can also help children to settle more quickly. This visit provides an opportunity for one-to-one interaction with you. Please see it as an opportunity to ask questions about your child's experiences in school. The visit will provide you with an opportunity to talk about your child and the school, to voice concerns, to clear up misunderstandings, and to lessen worries and fears that you or your child may have. The visit should not last more than 15 minutes. You will be given a day and time slot for your visit; this information will come to you soon.

If your child has been in our nursery but you would still like a visit, please contact the school office and we will arrange a time.

## Stay and Play

We will also offer an opportunity in September, for all children, to come and visit the classroom in a small group with their teacher, teaching assistant and other children who will be in the same class.

This is an opportunity for your child to meet some of the other children and play in the environment with them. You are welcome to stay with your child, or you might see it as appropriate to leave them for the session.

Date and time for this session will be sent to you soon.

## Start Dates

We start the children in small, staggered groups so they have the chance to settle in and familiarise themselves with the adults and the environment. For reception children, they

will do half days at first. They will finish after lunch so that we can settle them into their lunchtime routine.

The timings will be:

- ❖ Nursery – 8.45am – 11.45am
- ❖ Reception, half days at first: 8.55am – 1.30pm
- ❖ Reception, full time: - 8.45am-3.15pm

This information will be personalised for each child and will come to you via email shortly.

### Uniform, Clothing and Footwear

Children in the early years wear a different uniform to the rest of the school to meet the needs of their environment. Please read the school uniform policy carefully to see what they need.

Although we provide aprons, we cannot guarantee that glue, paint, and mud will not splash onto clothing or shoes. We recommend that children wear sensible shoes that are easy for them to independently manage. Children should not wear footwear with laces or sandals of any kind.

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires children to have constant access to outdoor provision and learning in all weather conditions. We, therefore, request that during the winter months children wear warm clothing and bring a waterproof coat.

During the summer months children will need a green sun hat and protective sunscreen should be applied before arrival to school. We have some spare clothes in school in the event of “accidents” and if your child does bring home clothing, please wash and return it as soon as possible. We are always grateful for donations of clothing; underwear, wellingtons, etc., that have been outgrown.

### All About Me

Included at the bottom of this handbook is an ‘All About Me’ sheet. The information you provide will help your child’s transition and assist them to settle. Please encourage your child to contribute their ideas. Please also provide a current photo of your family that will be part of a display to help the children settle in. If you’re unable to print and complete this, we will give you one to do when your child starts.

### Learning in the Foundation Stage

At St. Mary's the Nursery and Reception classes follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS). This curriculum is based upon four themes and principles.

Unique Child - Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We reinforce every child’s uniqueness within God’s family.

Positive Relationships - Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. We do this with other children, adults at home and school. Children will

be encouraged to begin to develop their Spiritual relationship with God their Father in Heaven.

Enabling Environments - Children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

Learning and Development - Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Curriculum Religious Education is our core subject. It permeates our whole curriculum through prayer, worship and Religious Education in class. You could help your child by learning the Hail Mary, Our Father and The Sign of the Cross.

There are 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas of learning in the Foundation Stage framework curriculum.

### Prime Areas

- ❖ **Communication and Language** - Speaking, listening, and understanding
- ❖ **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - Making relationships, managing feelings and behaviour, self-confidence and self-awareness
- ❖ **Physical Development** - Moving and handling, health and self-care

In the Prime Areas children will learn to: -

### Specific Areas

- ❖ **Literacy** - Reading and writing
- ❖ **Mathematics** - Number and shape, space and measures
- ❖ **Understanding the World** - People and communities, the world and technology
- ❖ **Expressive Arts and Design** - Exploring using media and materials and being imaginative

### The School Day

#### **A typical day in nursery:**

8.45 – 8.55: Children arrive at school  
9.00 – 9.15: Carpet session  
9.15 – 11.30: Child-initiated play  
11.30 – 11.45: Carpet session  
11.45: Home time

#### **A typical day in reception:**

8.45 – 8.55: Children arrive at school  
9.00 – 9.30: Carpet session – Usually phonics or Religious Education  
9.30 – 11.30: Child-initiated play  
11.30 – 12.00: Tidy up and carpet session – Usually collective Worship or Hymns  
12.00 – 1.05: Lunchtime  
1.05 – 1.30: Carpet session – Usually math  
1.30 – 2.45: Child-initiated play

2.45 – 3.15: Tidy up and story time

3.15: Home time

### Carpet Times

We have whole class sessions on the carpet at the beginning and end of each session. These times are used for explicit inputs for required areas such as phonics, math, religious education, and handwriting. They're also used for other things such as reading story books, story acting, singing, sharing photos from home and modelling the use of equipment.

### Child- Initiated Play

Our day is organised to maximise the periods of sustained uninterrupted play to encourage in-depth exploration. The children are free to follow their own interests for long periods of time. We do this because we want the children to be showing deep levels of engagement, this is when their brains are developing. These levels of engagement happen when the children choose what to play with and are given time to pursue their interests and persist.

Babies are born with billions of brain cells. With stimulation, these cells make connections or “synapses.” This is referred to as brain development or in other words, progress!

For this to be possible, we have to have the right environment. We see our environment as the third teacher (after you and us!). All areas of learning and development are offered throughout the indoor and outdoor environment and we constantly review and adapt it. We do not set activities out for the children, instead we have:

- ❖ **Accessible resources** – Rather than laying out set activities we have a range of resources available for the children to choose what they want to use and what they do with it.
- ❖ **High quality, open ended resources** – Such as blocks that can be used to make anything like a castle rather than an actual castle which has only one purpose.
- ❖ **Labelled and/or shadowed resources** – for easy access and tidying.

- ❖ **Literacy and Math resources in all areas** - Rather than restricting them to one area so that the children can use and apply them in real and meaningful contexts.



### In the Moment Planning

We believe that we should not plan ahead for very young children. Their interests are 'in the moment' and need to be responded to immediately to gain the full value. We use focus sheets that are a record of the activities that have happened.

Once a term, your child will become a focus child for a week and have a focus sheet filled in. During this week they will become a focus for extra observation, attention and support. This means that the adults will spend a bit more time with them, observing them carefully and looking for opportunities to discuss, extend or elaborate their activity. Some of the entries on the sheet will be a record of an activity that the child has completed independently but most will include the adult's intervention and the outcome. This is a record of how the child has been supported in taking the 'next steps' in their journey.



- ❖ Communication and language
- ❖ PSED – Resilience, confidence
- ❖ Physical development – Hand strength to form letters (for writing)
- ❖ And then phonics!

In nursery, the children will focus on phase one of phonics. This focuses on Sound discrimination, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds, oral blending and segmenting.

In reception we work through phases two, three, and four. These phases work on letter sounds, blending words for reading and segmenting words for writing. Children in reception will bring home phonics notebooks so you can practice what we have been doing in school at home. They will also bring home reading books after October half term. At first these may be wordless to help with learning to tell a story with pictures, where a story begins and turning pages. Your child will bring home a reading book with words when their teacher decides they are ready.

### Lunches, Fruit, and Milk

Your child will be given a water bottle on their first day. Please send this in each day with fresh water only– not juice etc.

Milk is free until your child is five, but you still need to order it. Once your child is five, you will need to pay the subsidised rate. Milk can be order via cool milk – [www.coolmilk.com](http://www.coolmilk.com).

Fruit is provided each day and left available with the milk for your child to have when they choose.

It is compulsory for reception and infant children to have a freshly prepared, healthy, and nutrition school meal. These are free. Please see the school handbook for more information. Nursery children will have gone home by lunchtime.

### Class Pets

Each class has a 'class pet', this is a soft toy that each child is given to take home for a weekend. The toy will come home with them on the Friday and spend the weekend with you. Your child will then return the toy to school the following week and share your adventures with the class.

### For your information:

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Isleworth TW7 7EE

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Fax: 020 8232 8820

[office@smi.hounslow.sch.uk](mailto:office@smi.hounslow.sch.uk)

[www.smi.hounslows.sch.uk](http://www.smi.hounslows.sch.uk)

# All About Me:

In order to fully support your child, this 'All About Me' sheet is designed to provide your child's teacher with the additional information they need to aid your child's transition to Nursery/Reception. It will help us to plan for your child's needs and assist them to settle. Please encourage your child to contribute their ideas, please provide a current family photo to add to our family photo display.

**I like to be called:**

**My date of birth is:**

**My home language is:**

**My cultural identity is:**

**I have been to a nursery/playgroup before, called:**

**My special toy or comforter is:**

**Other people who are important to me:**

**Things I like:**

**Things I don't like/worry me:**

**My Family Photo** (please do not stick)